

REMARKS

This is in response to an Office Action mailed August 7, 2007 in the above-identified application.

In the present Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 40, 45-46, and 50-54. In addition, Applicants have added new claims 59-64. New claims 59 depends from claim 54. New claim 60 is an independent claim and new claims 61-64 depend from new claim 60. Amended claims 40, 45-46, and 50-54, and new claims 59-64, are fully supported by the originally filed specification and add no new matter.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 40-43, 45, 46, and 54 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,997,419 to Lakatos et al. Referring to FIG. 1 thereof, Lakatos discloses a laparoscopy cannula including a shaft 12 having external threads 28 provided at a distal end thereof, and an internally-threaded connector 23 that is threadably coupled with the external threads 28. In turn, the connector 23 is threadably attached to a conical member 62. FIG. 4 shows a cross-sectional view of the connector 23 including an annular ring 42 having external threads that engage the internally threaded bore of the conical member 62 (FIG. 8). Due to the threaded connection between the connector 23 and the shaft 12, the connector 23 is threadably secured to a distal end of the shaft rail 12 and is not capable of moving or sliding freely along the longitudinal axis of the shaft 12.

In contrast, as shown in FIG. 1 of the present application, a guide rail 10 includes a collar 33 having a non-threaded internal lumen extending therethrough. As a result, the collar 33 is free to slide over the threaded outer-portion 32 of the guide rail. The collar 33 is selectively advanced toward the distal tip 14 of the guide rail by a driving member 34. As the driving member 34 is rotated, internal threads of the driving member engage the threaded outer-portion 32 of the guide rail for urging the collar 33 toward the distal tip 14. Referring to FIG. 3, as the collar 33 slides over the threaded outer-portion 32 toward the distal end of the guide rail, the collar 33 engages an attachment sleeve 43 on a medical instrument 40 for urging the medical instrument toward the distal tip of the guide rail 11.

Independent claim 40 is unobvious over Lakatos because the cited reference neither discloses nor suggests an intravaginal device including "a driving member coupled with the guide rail proximal to the movable collar for selectively advancing the movable collar toward the distal end of the guide rail." Claims 41 and 42 are unobvious, inter alia, by virtue of their

dependence from claim 40, which is unobvious for the reasons set forth above.

Claim 43 is unobvious because the cited references neither disclose nor suggest an intravaginal device "wherein the guide rail is configured to receive a slideable coupling element attached to a medical device which is configured to be moved in a longitudinal direction along the guide rail by the collar to guide the medical device over the guide rail." Lakatos provides no teaching or suggestion that the conical member 62 is movable in a longitudinal direction along the guide rail by the connector 32. For these reasons, claim 43 is unobvious over Lakatos and is otherwise allowable. Claim 43 is also unobvious, *inter alia*, by virtue of its dependence from claim 40, which is unobvious for the reasons set forth above.

Claim 45 is unobvious because the cited references neither disclose nor suggest an intravaginal device whereby "the guide rail has threads on an exterior portion thereof at a location proximal to where the distal end of the first elongated member is secured to the guide rail and the driving member has internal threads configured to operatively engage with the exterior threads and rotation of the driving member around a longitudinal axis of the guide rail is effective to provide longitudinal movement of the collar along the guide rail." For these reasons, claim 45 is unobvious over Lakatos and is otherwise allowable. Claim 45 is also unobvious, *inter alia*, by virtue of its dependence from claim 40, which is unobvious for the reasons set forth above.

Independent claim 46 is unobvious over Lakatos because the cited reference neither discloses nor suggests an intravaginal device having "a movable collar including a non-threaded internal lumen that enables the collar to slide freely over the outer surface of the guide rail along a longitudinal axis thereof and which is configured to engage a medical instrument distal to the collar for guiding the medical instrument toward the distal tip of the guide rail."

Independent claim 54 is unobvious over Lakatos because the cited reference neither discloses nor suggest an intravaginal device including a guide rail and a "collar having a non-threaded internal lumen adapted to slide freely over a threaded portion of the guide rail and being configured to guide the distally received medical instrument" toward the distal end of the guide rail.

New independent claim 60 is unobvious over Lakatos because the cited reference neither discloses nor suggests an intravaginal device having the limitations found therein including "a collar coupled with the guide rail and being adapted for sliding over the outer surface of the guide rail between the proximal and distal ends thereof, the collar having a non-

threaded internal lumen that is slidable over the threaded section of the guide rail; [and] a driving member disposed between the collar and the proximal end of the guide rail for selectively urging the collar toward the distal end of the guide rail, the driving member having internal threads for engaging the threaded section of the guide rail."

The Examiner rejected claims 10-13, 50-53, and 55-58 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lakatos in view of U.S. Patent 5,464,409 to Mohajer. In response, Applicants respectfully assert that Mohajer does not overcome the deficiencies noted above in Lakatos.

Applicants note that the addition of new claims 59-64 should not result in additional fees because Applicants earlier paid for nine independent claims and 53 total claims.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Office Action have been overcome, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application is earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that she telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 453-2884 in order to overcome any additional objections that she may have.

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Respectfully submitted,

By /michael j. doherty/

Michael J. Doherty
Registration No.: 40,592
DOHERTY IP LAW GROUP LLC
5 Mountain Ridge Drive
Oxford, New Jersey 07863
(908) 453-2884
Attorney for Applicants